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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Agricultural Sciences

# The reproduction of second-hand apparel shopping

– Understanding second-hand apparel consumption from a practice-based approach

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Department of Urban and Rural Development  
Master's Thesis • 30 HEC  
Environmental Communication and Management - Master's Programme  
Uppsala 2017



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**Credits:** 30 HEC

**Level:** Second cycle (A2E)

**Course title:** Independent Project in Environmental Science - Master's thesis

**Course code:** EX0431

**Programme/Education:** Environmental Communication and Management – Master's Programme

**Place of publication:** Uppsala

**Year of publication:** 2017

**Online publication:** <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

**Keywords:** second-hand shopping, second-hand consumption, apparel consumption, sustainable consumption, practice theory

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## Abstract

Textile and apparel consumption highly affect the environment, and a large amount of useable clothes are disposed to trash. This study examines second-hand shopping of clothes from a practice-based approach, more specifically Shove et al.'s (2012) view of practice theory, to create an understanding of how the practice is constituted and reproduced by its members. Data were collected through seven in-depth, semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in second-hand shopping. The analysis showed different links between the elements of meanings, materials and competences. Meanings are for example aspirations to live sustainably, from being unique to being sustainable, and enjoyment and positive feelings. Materials that are part of the practice are physical barriers, low prices and a vast supply. Competences related to the practice are the view on it as part of life, the skill of navigating the vast supply, and the skill of being patient. The analysis further showed that the practice is vivid, constantly changing and reproduced by its carriers, and that second-hand shopping incorporates reflection of the overall way of life. The study contributes to an understanding of one specific sustainable practice and these insights can further be helpful in preventing unsustainable shopping practices.

*Keywords:* practice theory, apparel consumption, second-hand shopping, textile waste, sustainability



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# 1 Introduction

In Sweden, the private clothing consumption increased by 24 percent during the years 2005-2015 (Roos, 2016). Today, many apparel companies use a business model called "fast fashion" (Kim et al., 2012), which means a larger number of designs are produced in a shorter period of time (Tokatli, 2007). This model makes sure that companies can match their supply to an uncertain demand (Kim et al., 2012). According to Birtwistle and Moore (2006) the high consumption of fast fashion has led to a "throwaway culture" where fully usable clothes are disposed (p. 214). A study conducted by the SOM-institute in 2011 showed that 62 percent of the Swedes more or less frequently discard intact clothes to waste (Gustafsson and Ekström, 2011).

Textile consumption, globally and in Sweden, highly affects the environment, both in terms of negative climate impact and in terms of hazardous emissions. Production demands large water usage and a lot of energy (Naturvårdsverket, 2016). Evidently, excessive clothing consumption leads to environmental problems and unnecessary waste. Even though the consumption of clothes decreased during 2011-2014 (Naturvårdsverket, 2016), there has been an increase from 2005-2015 (Roos, 2016). In 2014 the average Swede still bought around 13 kilos of textiles and clothing and disposed 8 kilos to household waste (Ibid). Each year, approximately 70 000 tons of textile ends up as household waste, of which half is considered usable and resalable by non-profit second-hand in Sweden (ISH, 2017). Non-profit second-hand, or charity shops, commercial second-hand or vintage stores, and buy-and-sell market places all contribute to reuse. The second-hand clothing market in Sweden is big, and increased with 16 percent between 2011-2014 (Naturvårdsverket, 2016). Swedish non-profit second-hand yearly collects around 22 000 tons of textile, of which on average half is resold in Sweden.

In light of the environmental impact of the apparel industry, and of the frequent buying habits of consumers, it is clear that society is facing a lot of challenges with this issue. Traditional change programmes aimed at changing behaviours have been criticised for focusing too much on individual attitudes, behaviours and choices (Shove, 2010; Hargreaves, 2011). In creating behavioural change we also need to create sustainable practices and not get caught looking at individuals' behaviours. Therefore, this study attempts to understand how a sustainable practice is constituted and reproduced by looking at the practice of second-hand shopping, and more specifically second-hand apparel shopping. By viewing second-hand apparel shopping as a practice itself, it is possible to find new aspects of the phenomenon and expand the understanding of it. This study attempts to describe second-hand apparel shopping with the help of practice theory, where the analysis focuses not on the individual attitudes or motivations, nor the structural conditions, but rather the practice itself - in this case second-hand apparel shopping.

The questions asked in this study are:

- **What characterizes second-hand apparel shopping?**
- **How is second-hand apparel shopping reproduced?**

The aim of the study is to describe how the practice of second-hand apparel shopping is constituted, and to understand how members of the practice reproduce it. This understanding could hopefully expand the understanding of second-hand shopping as a sustainable practice, which could be of value to find conditions for sustainable clothing consumption and further facilitate other sustainable practices.

## 1.1 Delimitations and clarifications

Second-hand apparel shopping is referred to in various expressions throughout this thesis - sometimes as shopping second-hand clothes, sometimes as second-hand shopping and sometimes as second-hand clothing consumption. All of these expressions refer to the second-hand shopping of clothes and nothing else. Second-hand shopping is regarded to entail donation of used clothes as well - since donations are the basis for the non-profit second-hand stores in Sweden.

Non-profit second-hand, discussed throughout the thesis, is sometimes referred to as charity shops. ISH (Ideell Second Hand) is an association for non-profit second-hand organisations in Sweden. Second-hand shopping is interpreted as all shopping of second-hand that takes place at charity shops, at commercial second-hand stores and at buy-and-sell market places (virtual or physical).



## 2 Background and literature review

### 2.1 Environmental aspects of textile consumption

The environmental impact of the clothing industry and textile consumption incorporates both negative climate impact and hazardous emissions. The production of textile demands large amounts of water and energy (Naturvårdsverket, 2016). Environmental impact can happen at any stage in the product's life cycle. Cotton grown conventionally is water intensive and dependent on pesticides, and in the factory, toxic waste products are created. Polyester requires oil for production and manufacturing plants emit several hazardous substances (Luz, 2007). Apart from the environmental aspects of textile production, in many countries the production also entails poor working conditions and low wages for workers (Ibid).

In Sweden, the total private consumption of clothes and shoes increased with 24 percent from 2005-2015 (Roos, 2016). Low prices, a high demand for fashionable clothes, and intensified production go hand in hand with a throwaway attitude (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007). Birtwistle and Moore (2007) found that consumers meant that "fast fashion" - short production time, faster fashion cycles and low prices (Kim et al., 2012) - encourages "a 'throwaway culture' where products of fast fashion lost intrinsic value, encouraging consumers to replace and dispose of products before their real life cycle had ended" (p. 214). In a Swedish study from 2011, 62 percent witnessed that they at some point had disposed intact clothes to waste (Gustafsson and Ekström, 2011).

In the EU's waste hierarchy, reuse is preferred over recycling, and a more efficient use of resources is part of the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2016). The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2016) recently published an investigation of consequences of introducing sorting requirements for textile in the existing waste management, or shifting the responsibility to the producers. The report also proposed information campaigns to educate the public about textile consumption and health and environmental impact. The assumption is that with the right information, the public can choose differently (Naturvårdsverket, 2016).

### 2.2 The second-hand apparel market in Sweden

The second-hand market in Sweden increased with 16 percent between 2011 and 2014 (Naturvårdsverket, 2016). In 2014, 70 000 tons of textile ended up as household waste, half of which were considered useful by non-profit second-hand (ISH, 2017). Today, reuse of clothes is made possible both by non-profit second-hand and by commercial second-hand/vintage stores, as well as private buy-and-sell market places (physical or digital).

In 2014, non-profit second-hand collected 22 000 tons of textile in Sweden. On average, around 50 percent of it is resold in Sweden (ISH, 2017). ISH's main focus is to create a surplus from their charity shops in order to fulfil the social work they do (ISH, 2014). Commercial second-hand stores, such as Beyond Retro, often purchase clothes container wise (Beyond Retro, 2017). Some stores process 10 000 kg of clothes a week (Pop Boutique, 2017). For established companies, clothes and fabrics are often repurposed or up-cycled (Beyond Retro, 2017; Pop Boutique, 2017). Others sell customers' clothes, giving 40 percent of the sales price to the person who submitted the item (Judits, 2017). Several of these actors also offer online shopping and shipping (Beyond Retro, 2017; Pop Boutique, 2017). Buy and sell between private individuals have become increasingly popular. Earlier clothes were mainly sold at physical market places. Today, there is a growing number of digital alternatives for private individuals who want to sell used clothes. Blocket and Tradera are well-established online market places for private individuals in Sweden, going back to the days before mobile applications were in use (Blocket, 2017; Tradera, 2017).

Blocket and Tradera have secured their businesses by keeping up with the mobile development. However, several other buy- and sell apps have popped up in Sweden during the last couple of years such as NyBytt, Schpock, Plick and LetGo (NyBytt, 2017; Schpock, 2017; Plick, 2017; LetGo, 2017). Sellpy is another novel service that offers an easy way for people to sell their used goods - you simply request a Sellpy-bag, pack it with your used clothes, Sellpy picks it up and takes care of the resale. Items that cannot be sold are donated to charity. 56 percent of the item's worth is paid back to the submitter (Sellpy, 2017).

## 2.3 Sustainability and consumption

Research on different types of consumption in relation to sustainability takes different approaches; some look at "sustainable consumers", "eco-conscious consumers" or "anti-consumers" (Bly et al., 2015; Connell, 2011; Black and Cherrier, 2010), others look at motivations for avoiding fast fashion or engaging in second-hand consumption (Kim et al., 2012; Guiot and Roux, 2010). Consumer perceptions on sustainable clothing have also been under study (Fisher et al., 2008).

In the UK, Fisher et al. (2008) studied the public's perception of sustainable clothing and found that although the knowledge on the subject is low, feelings of guilt are connected to consumption and waste. Therefore, to recycle and reuse can be means to take away these feelings (Ibid). Motives for second-hand consumption have also been under study. Motivational factors for second-hand shopping have been found to relate to critical reflections (ethical and ecological dimensions), economic and recreational factors (such as stimulation or treasure hunting), and these different motives seem to correlate with each other (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Fast fashion avoidance has been related to environmental concern (Kim et al., 2012).

Several studies focus on people who live a sustainable lifestyle or aspire to consume more sustainable (Bly et al., 2015; Connell, 2011; Black and Cherrier, 2010). Bly et al. (2015) found that "sustainable fashion consumption pioneers" are motivated by an experienced tension between sustainability and fashion, and the structural barriers for sustainable consumption "have become part of the sustainability definition, so that their acts of sustainability embody a form of *resistance* to seemingly unsurpassable systemic barriers" (p. 132). This opposition was also found by Cherrier (2009) in a study of consumer resistance, where the opposition is a creative act that "enables consumers to repositioning themselves in society" (p. 189). Cherrier et al. (2010) found that intentional non-consumption can be understood as a resistance towards other consumers.

Anti-consumption seems to be prioritised by "sustainable consumers". Black and Cherrier (2010) found that for sustainable consumers, anti-consumption - i.e. rejecting, reducing and reusing - is prioritised over so-called "green consumption", where you purchase new products perceived to be environmentally friendly. According to Bly et al. (2015) sustainability efforts from companies are seen as self-interest moves rather than authentic efforts to change, and sustainable fashion consumption pioneers hence disregard these companies (p. 133). Contrasting, Connell (2011) found that eco-conscious consumers do choose eco-conscious companies as well. However, it is important to note that both of the above-mentioned studies were small as well as conducted in different cultural settings, and therefore it is hard to contrast these two - even if the different findings are interesting.

A practice approach to consumer studies has been emphasized as a way to understand consumption (Warde, 2005). Briefly explained, practice theory focuses on practices (e.g. playing football, cooking, playing music) instead of the structures or the individual actors. However, while Warde (2005) claim consumption could be understood as something entailed in practices, rather than the practice itself - it is arguable that second-hand shopping (i.e. reuse) could be both entailed in other practices as well as a practice itself. Following Shove et al.'s (2012) take on how practices relate to each other in "bundles and complexes", and how new practices can "take hold at the expense of others which are no longer performed, or not performed as frequently as before" (p. 81) second-hand shopping

itself could be viewed as something that could be altering other practices who entail consumption. This way of thinking about second-hand shopping can further be supported by Røpke's (2009) claim that shopping as a practice "has implications for the consumption related to other practices" (p. 2495). Drawing on these definitions, the practice of second-hand shopping of clothes can be seen as a culturally understandable practice that connects to other practices. Following the thoughts of Hargreaves (2011), a practice approach illuminates more aspects of social life, instead of focusing on individual behaviour, and this is needed in order to achieve sustainable consumption and more sustainable practices (p. 96). Shove (2010) points out: "while social norms are often cited as driving factors, there is no scope at all for wondering about how needs and aspirations come to be as they are" (p. 1277). To take a practice based approach to a sustainable consumption practice, and to understand how that practice is constituted and reproduced, maybe could support the creation of more sustainable practices. However, Røpke (2009) illuminates a contradiction in applying practice theory on sustainable consumption; when practice theory is combined with lifestyle concepts, the "individual focus on self-identity and lifestyle becomes the background for the combination of practices in everyday life" (p. 2493).

A practice-based approach toward alternative consumption has been employed by for example Perera et al. (2016), who drew on the notions of Warde (2005), Shove (2004) and Røpke (2009) to find symbolic meanings associated with green consumption practices. The study examined green consumption practices among young environmentalists and found that "green consumption consists of learning, acquiring and interacting practices that are largely based on socially constructed meanings" (p. 14). The study showed that the symbolic meanings of green consumption varied from e.g. happiness and empowerment. (Ibid).

### 3 Practice theory

In order to find what characterizes second-hand apparel shopping and how the practice is reproduced, this study employs a practice-based approach. The practice is the unit of analysis, not the structure or the individual agents. This theoretical approach contrasts to many earlier studies of second-hand shopping, and further contributes to the rising number of consumption studies taking a practice-based approach.

In practice theory, diversified as it is (Nicolini, 2012, p. 1), agency and structure are seen as interdependent. The structure influences actions and interactions, and is produced and reproduced by actions and interactions (Ibid). Generally, practice theories have two things in common - the view of structure and agency as interdependent and the practice as the unit of analysis. Different scholars have defined practices differently. Schatzki (2005) define practice as "open-ended spatial-temporal manifolds of action" (p. 471). Although Schatzki (2005) acknowledge material objects, they are not emphasized in the same way as they are by Reckwitz (2002), who is more precise, and includes an emphasis on objects in the definition of a practice: "a routinized way in which bodies and objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are desired and the world is understood" (p. 250). To Shove et al. (2012) the role of objects, or materials, become even more important as they incorporate ideas from science and technology studies (p. 21) and claim "practices are defined by interdependent relations between materials, competences and meanings" and that "practices exist when elements are integrated" (p. 32).

In Shove et al.'s view on practices, which will be the main theoretical departure in this study, individuals participating in the practice are carriers of the practice (2012). The practices can evolve through small changes from the carriers, but these changes are "made possible by the circulation of new and different materials, meanings and competences" (Ibid, p. 73). According to Shove et al. (2012), "practices are provisionally stabilized when constitutive elements are consistently and persistently integrated through repeatedly similar performances" (p. 24). Links between the elements - materials, meanings and competences - are what constitute a practice, and these elements are both interdependent and mutually shaping each other (p. 38).

Materials can refer to different material objects - things, technologies etc. Materials can be physically transported, and location and access to material elements are important (Shove et al., 2012, p. 50). Competences refer to the specific knowledge or know-how that is needed in order to perform the practice. Competences can also be regarded as skills or techniques, or different forms of understanding. Meanings represent the "social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment" (p. 31), and can refer to different types of symbolic meanings, aspirations and ideas.

The temporal aspect of practices affects the way individuals can engage in the practice. The practice itself defines how much time a practitioner can be engaged in the practice. Time can be viewed as a finite resource of which different practices compete (Shove et al., 2012). The spatial aspect of practices can be understood from different positions. It can be the physical location where practices happen, or a resource. Co-location of practices, for example kitchens or offices, is a way of forming a "place" for the practice (Ibid, p. 123). For example, cooking has been co-located to the kitchen. Practices that happen in a "virtual place" hence are also co-located.

#### 3.1 Theoretical research model

To answer the research questions practice theory, and more specifically, Shove et al.'s (2012) take on practice theory, as explained above, functioned as the basis. However, practice theory can be used to study all types of practices - therefore an important part of the theoretical process was to fit in suiting aspects for this particular study. The theoretical

research model describes how the theory was used throughout the study. The aim of articulating the theoretical research model is to clarify the research process and vindicate the theoretical views. As described in the previous section, the fashion system and textile production are to a large extent unsustainable. Sustainable consumption is increasing, and several studies illuminate the ways in which people live sustainable. By viewing second-hand apparel shopping as a practice itself, it is possible to find new aspects of the phenomenon and expand the understanding of it. Below the different aspects of how the practice is studied are explained.

- **Materials:** Materials related to the practice will be assessed by looking at how participants go about in order to shop second-hand. Being part of the practice, what objects and technologies are important when second-hand shopping takes place? What things do shoppers need access to in order to perform the shopping? For example, it would be impossible to shop second-hand if there were no used clothes available.
- **Meanings:** By looking at what thoughts and feelings the participants have about their second-hand shopping, meanings will be assessed. To the members, what is the purpose of shopping second-hand? Why are they there? What do they think about second-hand apparel shopping? How is this expressed?
- **Competences:** Looking at what participants need to know in order to be part of the practice can assess the elements of competence. What skills do the members need to master in order to shop second-hand? How have they learnt? What is the understanding of the practice? For example, if members would not know where second-hand stores, physical or virtual, are located, they would not be able to shop second-hand.
- **Time and space:** Looking at how members of the practice perceive the temporal and spatial aspects of second-hand shopping can help the understanding of how the elements are connected and affected. Where does second-hand shopping take place? How is time visible in the practice?

## 4 Methodology

The aim of the study is to describe and understand the reproduction of the practice of second-hand apparel shopping. The practice is considered to encompass both donating clothes to and shopping clothes at different types of second-hand stores or sites, although the main focus for the analysis will be on the actual shopping.

This study adapts a qualitative approach, since the intention is to understand a certain phenomenon. Qualitative research is a way of "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 32). This contrasts to quantitative research, where the focus lies on testing and evaluating (Silverman, 2015). The qualitative approach used in this study is a result of the aim of the study and the broader social constructivist approach. Social constructivism comes from the idea that reality is constructed and re-constructed by human actors, and that reality is subjective (Bryman, 2012, p. 341). The social constructivist view goes in line with the theoretical lens employed for this study - in practice theory agency and structure are seen as interdependent, and interactions and actions are both influenced by, and influence, the structure (Nicolini, 2012). The research process principally follows an abductive approach, which means moving back and forth between theory and data (Saunders et al., 2012; Suddaby, 2006). Abduction could be seen as a combination between induction and deduction. The process of qualitative research is also emergent, which means that "some or all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 235). The data was obtained through qualitative interviews, which are further discussed later in this chapter.

### 4.1 Informants and recruitment

For the recruitment of informants, purposive and snowball sampling was used in combination. The sample consisted of seven (7) individuals, all involved in second-hand shopping. The reason for using both purposive and snowball sampling was difficulties in the recruiting process, which will be further discussed below. First, the plan was to decide the size of the sample upon the idea of saturation - "when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 239). After the seventh interview, it became clear that the sample could not be decided upon saturation, because of time limitations of the project. However, the interviewees still had congruent insights about the subject, but more likely this was a result of similar demographics than a result of saturation on the subject. This is further discussed in *6.1 Limitations*.

The basic criteria for the sample were that the participating respondents should regularly both shop second-hand and donate items to second-hand. The frequency of the shopping had to be at least a few times a year, and regularly. The interviewees needed to be able to speak about their shopping in an easy way, having it fresh in mind. Some respondents shop second-hand rarely but regularly, some often and regularly. The frequency of the donations had to be at least once a year. Donations are often more rare than purchases, but it was important to reassure that donations were made regularly. Hence, the donations range from once a year to a few times a year. Both of the above criteria served as an assurance that the interviewees would be enough involved in second-hand shopping/giving to be able to speak about their habits and experiences.

First, potential respondents were approached inside two different non-profit second-hand stores in the cities of Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden. Visitors in the second-hand stores were randomly approached and asked to answer a short survey. The survey consisted of a few questions regarding how often they shop at and/or donate to non-profit second-hand stores, and if they would like to participate in an interview about their habits and experiences of reusing clothes via second-hand shopping. Second, the collected surveys

were evaluated to fit into the criteria mentioned in the previous paragraph, and the individuals who wanted to participate in an interview were contacted via email. The email consisted of practical information about the interview and an inquiry of date and time for the interview. Two (2) respondents were approached in a different way, one was asked directly through mail, and one was asked through social media. These respondents were asked the same questions from the survey; accordingly the criteria for these respondents were the same as for the five other. The combination of recruiting methods was a means to reassure the recruitment of individuals involved in second-hand shopping.

The sample depended on 1) the composition of people who were inside the specific second-hand store on the day of recruiting, 2) the amount of people who were willing to answer the short survey, 3) the amount of people who would consider participating in the study, and 4) the amount of survey respondents that fitted into the criteria mentioned above. Hence, selecting interviewees, demographic factors were not taken into account. Although the informants' academic backgrounds were different, they had similar demographic characteristics. Six of seven interviewees were women, all between the ages 18 to 31. This was not intentional; it was a result of the recruitment. This will further be considered in *5.1 Limitations*.

## 4.2 Interviews

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. The reason for using this method is in part because of its flexible nature. Semi-structured interviews' allow a pre-set structure, as well as give respondents freedom in expressing their thoughts (Bryman, 2011, p.415-416). Talking about a specific subject, in this case second-hand shopping, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to talk freely as well as keep focus on the subject.

The interviews followed an interview guide with a set of themes and questions, but during the interviews new questions and discussions also emerged. This gave room for finding new aspects of the answers the respondents gave. A test interview was first conducted and recorded, after which the interview guide was further improved. The interview guide was designed to give the respondents the opportunity to talk about concrete actions, what they actually do and how they do it, and follow-up questions were aimed at giving respondents space to talk about their feelings about the things they do. The interview guide was divided into five sections, first an introduction with questions about how regularly informants are involved in second-hand shopping, where they shop etc. The second section touched upon the practical aspects of second-hand shopping, how they go about, how they know where to go etc. The third section covered what they do during the second-hand shopping and how they choose clothes, and how their shopping has changed during the years they have been involved. In the fourth section a bigger perspective of the practice was discussed, for example how (and if) this kind of shopping is different to shopping new clothes, and why they choose second-hand. In the fifth and closing section the different types of actors involved in second-hand sale was discussed, and the informants also got the chance to discuss additional aspects they wanted to reflect upon, as well as return to subjects they wanted to elaborate on.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The participants got assurance that they were anonymous in the study, and they all approved audio recordings of the interviews. Two interviews were conducted in the respondents own home, the rest were conducted at a neutral location such as a cafe or a conference room.

## 4.3 Processing and analysing the data

All seven (7) interviews were transcribed fully, leaving out only irrelevant parts. The transcription of the interviews started after the first interview and continued simultaneously during the interview period. The data was then read through several times to create an understanding of the data. Repetitive reading of the data is important in order to be able to

identify different codes (Denscombe, 2009, p. 372). The data was coded manually and followed the thought of abductive process, as described in the beginning of this chapter. Open coding was used together with priori coding. The reason for choosing to combine emerging and predetermined codes was to ensure not to overlook important aspects of the practice and its elements, reassuring both that the data was processed without prejudice and that the theoretical view was considered.

The data was analysed in three steps, however the process was iterative and agile. In the first step the data was mapped according to overarching questions like *what are they doing? How do they do it? Why are they doing it? What do they think about what they do? What do they need in order to do it?* These questions were derived from the data, the interview questions and the theoretical research model. After this first step, the data was read through several times. In the second step, open coding was used together with priori coding. The pre-set codes were derived from Shove et al.'s (2012) elements of practice - materials, meanings and competences. The predetermined codes were adjusted during the coding process, and new ones emerged. In the third step, the codes were categorized into the wider, theoretical parts. Some codes were categorized into several elements, and some codes were disregarded during the process because they lacked significance when they were related to the broader categorizes.

For the material elements, access referred to the physical constraints/possibilities, like location/distance/opening hours etc. Money referred to the financial aspects of the practice and supply connects to the actual supply of clothes and gadgets to be consumed. For meanings, elements included during the coding process were aspirations and purposes, which refers to the respondents own perception of what the purpose of the second-hand shopping is and thoughts and feelings, which refers to the respondents' feelings about the practice. For competences, the final codes were understanding and know-how/skills. General understanding refers to reflexive understandings about the identity of the practice and is connected to why the people are there. Know-how/skills refers to how the participants do what they do and what skills they need to master in order to do it. As previously stated, the purpose of these codes was decided both from looking at the actual theory, saying that practices are defined by links between the different elements of materials, meanings and competences, as well as at the data generated from the interviews.

Initially, the focus lied on identifying and describing the different elements that constitute the practice. However, it soon became apparent that the temporal and spatial aspects of the practice are important as well. In practice theory as expressed by Shove et al. (2012), time is not an element itself. The relation between time and practices can be framed in different ways, but the one adopted in the analysis is that described in the previous chapter (3 *Practice Theory*) of this thesis. The spatial aspect was also considered during the analysis.



## 5 The practice of second-hand shopping

In the following chapter the result/analysis is presented. The practice of second-hand shopping is analysed from the theoretical lens of practice theory, more specifically the theoretical model presented in section two (2). Findings are presented with several quotes from the transcriptions, however crutch words (disfluencies) are not included in quotes. All quotes are numbered and can be found in their original Swedish form in appendix 1. Donations are regarded to be part of the practice. Since donations are more rare than purchases, the majority of the analysis focuses on the shopping-part.

The different elements presented in the findings below are interdependent and are mutually shaping each other. According to Shove et al. (2012) the interdependencies can lead to that when new elements enter the frame, others are affected.

### 5.1 The meanings of the practice

Analysing the elements of meaning, the following aspects were analysed: aspirations and purposes, and thoughts and feelings. Below, findings from the interviews are presented and analysed. The three findings - *sustainability aspirations*, *from unique to sustainable*, and *enjoyment and positive feelings* - are presented below with quotes and each finding is concluded with an extended analysis.

#### 5.1.1 Sustainability aspirations

A general pattern observed is that the respondents connect their engagement in second-hand shopping to sustainability and environmental sustainability. Not all the respondents have the same purposes or are involved for the same reasons, or give environmental sustainability the same amount of significance. For example, one interviewee said ultimately it is about that she wants to shop clothes. However, everyone to some extent have the aspiration to "not waste", "live sustainable", "consume less" etc. There is a clear tendency that the respondents want to "reuse" and do not want to waste when it comes to clothes. One respondent said she prefers to buy few items and use them well, and that she does not like unnecessary waste. Another one said that second-hand shopping (as well as donations) itself makes her reflect upon her own needs, behaviours and habits and her overall way of life.

"I feel like there are no alternatives - if humanity are to survive on this planet, we need to reuse the materials we have. And one way to do that is to buy second-hand." (1)

"It's this, this to not wear out or to waste unnecessarily, try not to produce unnecessary waste, be thrifty." (2)

"You use a clean glass every single time you want to drink water, all the time, we just waste and waste and waste and I believe we have to, I have to do whatever I can, where I can. How much I use, how much I consume." (3)

"I really appreciate the fact that second-hand makes me reflect upon my own needs and behaviours, and my habits. We consume so much, we consume food and pleasures and everything. And it really makes me think about my way of life. It feels like an important societal function." (4)

"I'm not like an H&M-shopper, and it's about that I don't like to shop a lot. I'd rather shop little and good." (5)

According to Shove et al. (2012), when individuals participate in practices they "locate themselves within society and in so doing simultaneously reproduce specific schemes and structures of meaning and order" (p. 57). To "not be an H&M-shopper" means you are locating yourself in society, while at the same time you are reproducing the meanings of the practice you are in. The environmental meanings of the practice are visible in the

respondents' answers, however regarding second-hand shopping overall several different perceptions emerged among the respondents' answers. Some reasoned that even though it is second-hand shopping, you should not consume unnecessarily, while others reasoned that second-hand consumption is far different from regular consumption and therefore can work almost as a "free pass".

"It's consumption as well, and I believe you should always ask yourself why you consume and that you should not over consume regardless, even if... I think it's easy to get caught in that line of thought that, it doesn't matter, it's for a good cause. I try to think about it in that way." (6)

"I don't really view second-hand consumption as shopping, it's more... It's a very clear difference to me, if I buy something new, when I do I'm very aware. It feels like very much this... this is a new piece of clothing or a brand new item, this is something new. But if I shop at second-hand and it's totally new for me it doesn't feel completely new, and that's a very big difference to me I would say." (7)

The different views on what consumption is related to second-hand shopping show that the practice is versatile and encompasses a broad range of perceptions, and that sustainability aspirations can figure in different ways, but still be an important meaning of the practice.

#### *5.1.2 From unique to sustainable*

The meaning of the practice seems to have transformed over the years. Participants who have been involved a long time have transformed the practice, and transformed themselves, during this time. "The trend" of second-hand shopping was discussed by respondents and referred to as one of the reasons why they began their second-hand endeavours, alongside with the prospect of finding unique clothing and wanting to stand out from the rest. Today, being unique is no longer the aspiration. The interviewees seem to have morphed into "sustainable consumers" who shop second-hand in order to achieve their aspiration to live sustainably. The meaning of the practice is still connected to trendiness, but the longer you stay in the practice, the more the meaning transforms. Or, maybe the trend is no longer uniqueness in the sense of a unique style of clothing, but instead the uniqueness of living differently, of separating yourself from the masses by consuming consciously.

According to Shove et al. (2012) meanings can change when other elements of the practice change. As elements change or new elements emerge, the interdependency between the elements cause other elements to change as well. A thing that might have enabled the meaning to transform could be that materials, more specifically the supply, seems to have changed; before, the supply, according to the respondents, was more "messy" and included more old clothes. In turn, this shift in the supply could also be a result of a shift in donations. This material element, the donations, is essential for the charity shops, since the clothes they sell are all donated from the public. The more people who donate clothes, the more the charity shops can adjust the supply in the stores. Another thing that might have affected the meaning of second-hand apparel shopping is the symbolic meaning of sustainability. As the practice of sustainability expands the meanings of it comes to encompass more and more practices. Shove and Pantzar (2005) showed how the meanings of wellbeing travelled and got associated with Nordic Walking (walking with sticks), where meanings were extended and eroded "as a result of dynamic processes of association" and where "the meaning of wellbeing extends to encompass this practice" (p. 45). Similar, second-hand shopping as an environmental/a sustainability practice could have emerged as its associations changed. As mentioned earlier, according to Shove et al. (2012), individuals "locate themselves within society and in so doing simultaneously reproduce specific schemes and structures of meaning and order" (p. 57). The sustainability aspirations associated with the practice of second-hand shopping can be seen as both a way of locating yourself within society and a meaning that encompass several practices.

### 5.1.3 Enjoyment and positive feelings

A clear purpose of the practice is related to the actual rituals and feelings connected to the practice. The respondents like the process of second-hand apparel shopping. For example, routinely going to have a fika and just a look around was brought up as a reason, as well as going second-hand shopping as a tradition. The mission of finding what you are looking for was also brought up as an aspect of the practice; the process of looking, no matter for how long, is intriguing. Some also perceive the process itself as fun.

"It's also something nice - in the same way as you're strolling around regular stores, you can go to.... There is a café at one of the charity shops that I usually visit. Like, going on a Saturday and having a look around, having a fika, without any actual goals. It's also a bit more exciting because you never know what you'll find. It's a routine to go there and see if there's anything fun to buy; it's part of it." (8)

"My mother and I used to have this tradition, but now I don't have the time anymore. Once a month, on a Wednesday, we used to go in the morning to have a morning fika at a café called Fågelsången, and then we headed towards Myrorna. After the shopping I walked to school. It was really cosy." (9)

"Another thing is that it's more of a mission today. I've been looking for a specific book with a specific cover for two years. It's exciting to think that I might find it someday." (10)

"I also think it's fun. I've been going on flea tours with friends, with family, I enjoy it." (11)

A noticeable observation was that informants clearly have guilty consciences because of their overall consumption, a guilt that is absent when they shop second-hand. The guilty consciences are connected to environmental or social aspects, according to the respondents. Respondents do buy newly produced clothes as well, but some witnessed that it happens less often now than before, and that buying newly produced clothes creates guilt because of their environmental concern. Others talked about the social aspects, like working conditions for those working in the sweatshops in other countries. These aspects of the clothing industry, the environmental and social aspects, clearly affect how respondents feel about the practice of second-hand shopping. This also connects to their aspirations and purposes and these connections will be discussed further on in this thesis.

"It's all good. Like, you can shop with a clear conscience." (12)

"Maybe you really want to have more clothes to choose from, but then you get a bad conscience, because you don't want to buy stuff you don't need." (13)

The interviewees experience positive feelings when they buy at or donate used items to a second-hand shop. The feelings of wellbeing respondents have when they engage in the practice were explicitly expressed. This observation was strong, the respondents both expressed themselves in strong words as well as got back to the subject several times during the interviews.

"This whole idea that you can reuse, donate, and that the money often are used for this and for that, everything just makes me completely satisfied." (14)

"It's like, it is so great knowing that it's not a new thing you buy - this has benefited someone else and I also benefit from it. It gives me a very good feeling." (15)

"It's natural, it's like walking into any other store, except it feels good walking in there. I can get anxiety from entering other stores." (16)

"Also, the reason is that it feels good in my body to go shopping for children's clothes at a non-profit second-hand store. Because it's like, you know that the money are donated to something good, and you know that the clothes are... I like to really use stuff." (17)

The feelings associated with the practice include positive feelings and enjoyment of the process. These feelings are connected to sustainability aspirations, but they are also something that could affect materials and competences of the practice.

## 5.2 The materials of the practice

Several aspects of the material elements were analysed - access, money, and supply at stores. The findings were connected to *physical barriers*, *low prices*, and a *vast supply*.

### 5.2.1 Physical barriers

The material elements are essential for the respondents to be able to engage in the practice of second-hand. The practice requires stores available to shop in, and stores closer to the city are more accessible. Centrally located second-hand stores are visited more frequently than stores further away. The most important thing that decides if the interviewees can get access to a store or not, is whether or not it is accessible by bike or public transport. With stores that are within reach, respondents testified that they have visited or regularly visit several second-hand shops during the same trip. However, furniture or other larger items are harder to purchase for the interviewees, since most of them do not own a car. The focus of their shopping lies on clothes and smaller items.

Websites for second-hand shopping, like Tradera, where private persons sell used goods, are more accessible than physical stores, since it is possible to visit them online, when- and wherever. The fact that it is so accessible affects how often some respondents visit Tradera.

"I think it's fun to search for stuff at Tradera. I went on there last night; I would say it's kind of a way to pass time." (18)

"Also, it feels like a simple thing to do, to sit at home, like online shopping but at Tradera instead, just looking to see if there's anything interesting." (19)

Physical barriers could well be understood as a spatial aspect of the practice; however, in this context it is better understood as an explanation of how technologies can affect the practice itself. These technologies affect the spatial dimension of the practice. As technology such as mobile applications for buy-and-sell market places have evolved, it has facilitated the reproduction of the practice. As exemplified by Shove et al. (2012), to e.g. play poker online is not the same as "overcoming space", but instead it is about creating co-location, as co-location once was created in kitchens and offices (p. 123). Such arrangements can lead to changes of the practice itself. In this case it already has - the virtual co-location has enabled the practice of second-hand apparel shopping to transform, as carriers now can be at different physical locations but still reproduce the practice.

### 5.2.2 Low prices

The price of the actual clothes affects the way interviewees engage in the practice. At first, some respondents said the price was not affecting them at all - not the amount of clothing bought, and not which stores they decide to visit. However, it became apparent that prices actually affect the practice and its members more than what is initially obvious. For example, one respondent realised during the interview that because of the price, she preferred a specific second-hand store to others. She also thought of second-hand shopping as a luxury to being able to buy whatever she wanted without it affecting her economy too much. A third said that buying something second-hand is less of an investment than buying something brand new, since the price is lower.

"Usually, I don't care. There are certain stores that are more expensive than others. Maybe that's why I like Bikupan, because it's usually not the most expensive. I believe that it may be a reason." (20)

The low prices can be seen as a material element to which the respondents do not directly relate their involvement. However, the element still shapes the actual practice by its integration with other elements. The low price enables members of the practice to actually shop without the financial investment of more expensive purchases, and can also be connected to the meanings of the practice. When meanings were different, at the time when the members entered the practice, the low prices were more important in order to be able to

buy unique clothing. Today, when the meanings have changed, so has the importance of the price. The price is also tightly connected to another material element, the vast supply.

### 5.2.3 Vast supply

Without the supply of used clothes and gadgets the practice would not exist, and engaging in the practice would be impossible. For non-profit second hand stores, the supply starts with donations. Overall, the respondents said they donate between 1 to 3 times a years. All interviewees appear to be intentional donors, some with a more specific approach than others. One assesses each piece of clothing with questions like "have I used this piece during the last six months? if not, why should I keep it?" while others just sort their clothes during a cleaning. Some use containers for donation, others give directly to a specific shop, and one has used a service called Sellpy. The actual clothes are transported from the donators' homes, to donation bins, or directly to charity shops, from where they again are transported to the specific shop.

When shopping for second-hand clothes, the supply of clothes seems to affect the respondents in various ways. To several respondents, the supply was one of the reasons they started engaging in the practice to begin with. They could find unique pieces and create their own style. To several of these respondents, the supply is also the reason they are now beginning to look for more sorted, often commercial second hand stores. As their time available to look for used clothing has decreased, the supply has become time consuming instead of a source for unique clothing. As they have gotten older, they have also become more selective in their reuse. One respondent said she was now looking for items practically unused. The practice thus both attracts and repels members because of its material elements.

"Earlier, it was probably more non-profit, but lately maybe it has become more Beyond Retro, Pop Boutique. They are more well-sorted, it takes less time to find more trendy items." (21)

The actual clothes available to consume are essential to the practice; without them, the practice could not exist. This further emphasizes Shove et al.'s (2012) view on materials as something constitutive in everyday life. Nonetheless, it is important to again note that elements are mutually shaping each other. The supply exist because of donations, and donations exist because of certain competences and meanings, as well as the infrastructure available to facilitate donations.

Regarding the aspect of time, mentioned above, the observations made correspond well with the notion that time is a finite resource of which practices compete. Respondents testified that the time available for second-hand consumption has decreased as other practices in their lives take up more time.

## 5.3 The competences of the practice

For the element of competence, understanding of the practice, know-how/tactics, and knowledge were analysed. The competence needed in order to engage in the practice is in basic terms being able to move around the city and to know which stores to visit. For the interviewees, walking, bicycling and being able to go with public transport are essential know-hows, as well as, to some, driving a car. In a sense, the practice of second-hand consumption depends upon other practices (such as riding a bike). In the analysis, several findings were made: *developing the doings as part of life*, *navigation inside stores* and *having patience*.

### 5.3.1 Developing the doings as part of life

The members understand the practice as part of life. This understanding is strongly linked to the meaning of environmental sustainability, which as mentioned before extends beyond this specific practice. The participants understand the practice as a way of living sustainable. The competence is integrated in their lives and something developing over

time. One respondent said her life philosophy has become to be selective in her shopping, both through choosing good quality clothing and by shopping second-hand. Another said nowadays she only buys stuff that she actually uses, and that feelings of "must-have" have been erased.

The respondents discussed that they many times have gotten information from friends who were involved in second-hand shopping before them, or that they have gotten introduced to the practice by following friends on "second-hand trips". Others say they have a special "eye" for second-hand shops, or have learnt from their families; one person even called it a heritage. This respondent still takes second-hand trips together with her mother, where they spend a lot of time going through the stores.

Respondents witnessed that "must have"-feelings have become less important. The members know what feelings they get when they engage in the practice in this way, and it helps them tackle both feelings of guilt, both in terms of the environment and of money, and the wish to set them selves aside from unnecessary waste. There is a tendency that the emotional attachment to items is not that important, and that the personal ownership is disconnected as long as the item is not in use.

"I'm super good at throwing away things. I'm not a hoarder. I think: How often do I use this? I like when things are in order." (22)

"I pick out things I haven't used. Usually I think, if I haven't used this I should seriously consider not keeping it in my closet. And if it's more than a year, why am I still keeping it?" (23)

"I'm not that emotionally attached to 'things', some of friends are like "I wore this blouse that time, and this and that happened". Sure, maybe I won't donate my prom-gown, or... maybe I already donated it." (24)

In a way, there seems to be an understanding of that the practice is part of an on-going, bigger process. This could be viewed as a form of asceticism connected to the practice, which turns against fast and unnecessary consumption. The members of the practice have developed their second-hand shopping over time and they keep developing it. In Shove et al. (2012) words, "learning through doing goes on all the time and often without noticing" (p. 51). For the practice of shopping second-hand clothes, there seems to be a combination of learning through doing without noticing, but also a purposive learning process. Competences can circulate between practices and between people, and knowledge travel when it is abstracted from one situation (Ibid). Knowing how to waste less is a competence that could be linked to other practices as well - it is in some ways abstracted from the specific practice of shopping second-hand clothes.

### *5.3.2 Navigating the supply*

The practice of second-hand apparel shopping requires being able to screen through a massive amount of clothing. This is one of the most important know-hows for the practice. The supply of clothes is vast, and it takes effort to find the items that respondents are looking for. The interviewees employ different tactics for handling the material element that is the supply. Some choose specific more sorted stores over others and some have specific know-how for screening through the vast supply inside charity shops.

To a group of respondents, certain materials and brands are often more interesting than others, because of their quality, and in these cases the practice also requires knowledge about brands and materials (e.g. natural fibres vs. synthetic materials). A few of these consumers turn to websites like Tradera or private-owned vintage stores. If other closely connected practices have affected their view on quality clothing, or if these participants have developed their skills within the practice of second-hand shopping, or if it is a combination, is hard to tell.

"These days I've moved onto Pop Boutique and maybe Beyond Retro, because, the reason now is more environmental reasons rather than for charity... So, therefore I choose the more well-sorted stores, which are more my style." (25)

There is a tendency that those who are looking for more specific clothes to a larger extent feel overwhelmed by the supply at charity shops. Those who effortlessly navigate among the different styles and sizes employ a form of "tactic of openness" in order to continue the practice. They have learnt not to limit themselves to specific characteristics of the clothes, instead their wants are fluid and are open to change.

"Instead I pretty much adapt to the supply. (...) I think that makes it easier for me, that I'm adaptable." (26)

"Every time, if I am to find anything I must enter with an open mind." (27)

"If I have this kind of idea of what I want, it's usually very fuzzy. So usually, if I don't find what I want, instead I find something that works very well." (28)

The navigation skills of the members of the practice are important in order to manage the material elements, mainly the vast supply. This competence is learnt through doing. For those who shop for specific brands or items, the competence also encompasses a change in activities - as they are choosing well-sorted stores etc. To be able to navigate the supply is important regardless of where you shop, and these navigation skills are varied. As Shove et al. (2012) note, "elements of know-how are typically modified, reconfigured and adapted as they move from one situation or person to another" (p. 55).

### *5.3.3 Having patience*

Patience is an important aspect of the practice, so important it can be regarded to be a form of competence. As second-hand shopping is time consuming, and since the supply is so big, patience is an essential part of the practice. If respondents are patient, they can eventually find what they are looking for. This patience reaches over years of "keeping their eyes open" for specific things they are looking for. One interviewee has been looking for a specific book with a specific cover for two years. Another one says she has been looking for a few specific items for several years. Others have items they indirectly look for - things they collect. They keep these things in the back of their head over a long period of time.

"There are some things I've been searching for, for years." (29)

"I've been searching for a specific book with a specific cover for two years now." (30)

"I always keep it in the back of my head; I always have an extra eye." (31)

"It's like I keep it in the back of my head, thinking I might find it, but I usually do not enter the store with the expectation to find it, because that's just not how it works at second-hand." (32)

Members of the practice have learnt to keep things in the back of their head, always looking out for specific items of interest. They have learnt to not rush to buy a newly produced product, but wait and instead continue looking for it in a second-hand store. Based on this, patience can be regarded as a skill, which the participants of the practice have acquired. This skill can be connected to meanings of the practice, and can be seen as a method the carriers have developed in order to sustain their second-hand shopping and continue to be environmentally friendly/live sustainably. However, this competence might work differently or be of another importance when the shopping is conducted online instead of at physical stores. Online second-hand apparel shopping is part of the practice, but the competences to manage the differences between a physical store and an online store might not be the same. As one respondent witnessed, a reason for choosing Tradera might be that she can search for a specific brand or piece and directly see if it is available to buy. This could mean that patience is not as crucial when the shopping takes place online.

## 5.4 The integration of elements and the reproduction of the practice

When one element changes, as a consequence, others can transform. For example, from the beginning car driving required specific skills and competences, which lead to that very few people could get involved in car driving and those who owned a car needed to have a chauffeur. As the material elements changed - the driving of the car was simplified and garages and gas stations emerged - the skills needed for driving a car changed and the meaning of car driving as a practice changed as a result of this (Shove et al., 2012, p. 27). The meaning of second-hand consumption was, according to the respondents, different when they began to engage in the practice. Over the years, new types of understanding emerged, for example the understanding of environmental issues connected to consumption, and this could be partly the cause for the change of meanings. At the same time, the vast supply (materials) that before were highly connected to the meaning of trendiness (in wearing unique clothes) today need to be mediated with specific know-how (navigating the supply). As the meanings change, so do competences. As the meaning of the practice becomes more connected to environmental concerns and selective shopping, the more know-how is needed in order to engage in the practice. However, to some, the meaning of the practice does not mean selectiveness in the way that the vast supply is seen as an obstacle, and for those people, meaning is still related to enjoyment.

The analysis show that the practice of second-hand apparel shopping is a practice that is constantly moving and changing. It also shows that materials can alter the practice. Technical innovations, such as online platforms or mobile applications for shopping, has created a new space for the practice, which makes it possible for members of the practice to perform the practice in different ways than before the days of smartphones. These changes in materials also affect the competences needed to perform the practice. On one hand, navigation skills inside stores become less important and on the other hand, performing the practice via an application requires other skills, not explored in this study. The link between the vast supply and the navigating skills can be said to be one of the challenges of expanding the practice. To members, this is the hardship with the practice.

The competences are integrated with other elements of the practice - patience is connected to sustainability aspirations and enjoyment of finding what you are looking for after a long time of searching. The navigation skills are integrated with the vast supply, as these skills are important to cope with the supply. The more general understanding moves beyond the specific practice, and is also integrated with the meanings of the practice. For example, the change in meaning - from being unique to being sustainable - has also induced change in the understanding of the practice. Now, to avoid must-have feelings have become important for the respondents and the doings are perceived to be part of life. The feelings of the members are connected to the supply as it can induce feelings of enjoyment, but also overwhelming feelings. Positive feelings are also connected to the price, which in turn is connected to the massive supply. The reproduction of second-hand apparel shopping takes place online, at vintage or charity shops, and through other closely connected practices. However, the reproduction of the practice does not cease to happen as members leave the second-hand charity shop downtown or their mobile application - the meanings, competences and materials extend beyond the spatial location, regardless of if the location is physical or virtual.



## 6 Discussion

The meanings of second-hand apparel shopping, which have been illuminated in this thesis, might not be valid for all people who consume second-hand goods. Probably, several parallel and related second-hand practices with varied meanings exist. However, the meanings identified from the respondents in this study are true for the practice they are engaging in, and these meanings are interdependent with materials and competences of the practice. The meaning of the practice is complex and fluid over time. Participants experience guilt when they move away from the practice and positive feelings when they participate in the practice. Hence, the positive feelings related to consumption of second-hand clothing seem to be connected to their environmental concern. Avoidance of guilt, and feelings of guilt, has also been reported by Fisher et al. (2008), who found that both recycling and reuse are perceived as ways to lessen guilt. However, that respondents also experience positive feelings when they engage in the practice tells us something more than that they just feel guilty when they shop at traditional shops; it tells us something more about the actual practice of second-hand apparel shopping. Previously, motivational factors have been found to incorporate recreational factors, such as "treasure hunting" and "stimulation" (Guiot and Roux, 2010); here, motivations are seen as something driving individuals. Participants of second-hand clothing consumption also testified that positive feelings (could be compared to stimulation) and wanting to find specific items (could be compared to treasure hunting) are connected to the meaning of the practice. However, competences and materials could also shape these meanings, e.g. an understanding of the environmental impacts of the clothing industry and the vast and diverse supply of items at second-hand stores. By turning away from the individual motives and by looking at how the elements are linked, we can also understand how the practice is reproduced by recurrent doings and sayings.

Some meanings extend beyond the specific practice, to also encompass other practices. An assumption made by Shove et al. (2012) is that elements are out there, "waiting" to be linked with other elements. Meanings can in this way overlap to other practices carried by participants. The practice of second-hand consumption seems to both transform other practices and transform itself because of other practices. As noted by a participant - the practice itself favour reflections of how life is lived. This could also be interpreted as connected to Røpke's (2009) claim that shopping as a practice "has implications for consumption related to other practices" (p. 2495). Even though this study focused on *second-hand* shopping of clothes, the ideas and activities connected to the practice seem to connote changes in other practices as well. For example, a respondent that highly enjoy both reading and owning books had been looking for a specific book for several years - i.e. second-hand shopping has affected other practices that she is involved in.

The perceived tension between fashion and sustainability, reported by Bly et al. (2015), can also be found in this study. Several respondents noted that they nowadays buy things they actually need or use. This could be seen as a tension - buying stuff just because they are fashionable is not what the respondents do, and if they do, they buy it second-hand. For the respondents, shopping second-hand is also affecting how many new clothes they buy, but not only because they have environmental concerns. It is also connected to prices - to buy something new is a bigger investment. According to Black and Cherrier (2010), reusing is prioritized over "green consumption". This seems to be true for these respondents as well. The respondents buy new clothes as well, but several witnessed that it happens less often than before. This could be an indication of that reuse is seen as prioritized. Cherrier (2009) suggested that consumer resistance is a creative act that "enables consumers to repositioning themselves in society" (p. 189). This could correspond to the findings made in this study, where reflection and comparison to others can be seen as a "positioning".

The material elements of the practice affect how members are able to engage in the practice. Access to stores or online sites are a basic requirement, and the respondents prefer to be able to access the store by foot, bike or public transport, by car is also an option to some. The vast supply and the unique items that come with it divide the respondents. To some, the supply is a source of unique and different items - to others it is a source of useless clothes. Many respondents testified that when they began their second-hand shopping, years back, the supply was what attracted them to the practice. Today, many perceive it as an actual material obstacle - they simply think it is too much to find the "good" things.

Donation is the foundation for the supply of clothes, but it is also connected to the meaning of the practice. While 62 percent of the Swedes at some point have discarded fully usable clothes into waste (Gustafsson and Ekström, 2011), the practice of shopping second-hand clothing also entails the activity of donating clothes instead of throwing them away. Birtwistle and Moore (2007) point out that there exists a throwaway culture encouraged by the amount of new clothes bought. Second-hand consumption instead seems to incorporate a form of reflection, which might very well be in line with the "embodied resistance" Bly et al. (2015) observed. The findings in this study also support Black and Cherrier's (2010) observation that anti-consumption is prioritised over "green consumption". Second-hand shopping seems to take time away from all consumption of newly produced goods. This could be interpreted as in line with the notion that practices compete for the resource that is time (Shove et al., 2012).

The understanding of the practice is connected to the competences needed in order to manage the other elements of the practice. The practice requires some basic forms of competence and know-hows, such as being able to move around in the city, knowing which stores that are available, physical or virtual, etc. Further, one of the most important competences or know-hows the respondents have is the ability to navigate the endless amount of clothes available at charity shops. Some have developed specific tactics for assessing the clothes, others have decided to turn to well-sorted vintage stores or websites instead. Another competence several respondents witnessed of is patience. Patience can be regarded to be a competence since several interviewees claimed they have increased their ability to be patient over the years they have been involved in the practice.

By looking at second-hand shopping from a practice theory lens, it becomes clear that the practice has transformed over the years, and keeps transforming. Second-hand apparel shopping is characterized by a vast supply, patience, non-waste aspirations and much more. However, what most characterizes second-hand shopping is transformation. The practice is characterized by transformation, and reproduction of the practice happens constantly - not only at the specific locations for second-hand shopping. The fact that reproduction happens all the time, even when members are not actively engaging in the practice, could implicate either that second-hand shopping is a practice within a bigger practice, or that the practice is very closely connected to other similar practices with similar meanings and competences.

## 6.1 Limitations

The findings of this study give another perspective on second-hand consumption, but the study holds limitations. The findings are limited to the perceptions and experiences of the seven respondents that were interviewed for the study, and are not generalizable beyond this. The methodological choices have been made in an attempt to give as much validity to the findings as possible, however difficulties in the recruiting process lead to respondents being approached in different ways - five was recruited via second-hand stores in Uppsala and Stockholm and two were approached through email and social media. All respondents answered a short survey to assess how regularly they were involved in second-hand shopping. The fact that respondents had similar demographic backgrounds poses further problems into the findings of this study. What would the analysis have looked like if the respondents had very different demographic backgrounds? Based on the findings of this study, the practice of second-hand apparel shopping seems to be multi-faceted. Therefore, it

would be interesting to include several informants with various demographics in further studies. This could in turn have shown other materials and competences of the practice. Several connected and similar, yet different, second-hand shopping practices might exist. This is important to consider when looking at the findings of this study. The validity of the findings are limited to these specific individuals - young, environmentally aware people, mostly women with higher education. In another context, the findings might have been very different. Further, different perceptions and thoughts emerged among these seven similar respondents. For example, some respondents want to prevent unnecessary consumption even if they shop second-hand, others view second-hand shopping as a free pass. Throughout the analysis, an aim has been to present different perspectives and to cover the various perceptions. However, there might exist other elements not found in this particular, limited study.

## 7 Conclusion

As discussed throughout this thesis, a practice-based approach is interesting when studying consumption, since it covers several aspects of how social life is constituted. The aim of this study was to describe the practice of second-hand apparel shopping and understand how members reproduce the practice. As considered in the analysis and the discussion, the practice is constantly transforming and reproducing. The practice is versatile and entails a lot of different perceptions and doings, and different materials are important to it. There are strong connections between the supply of clothes and the competences needed in order to engage in the practice, as well as strong connections between the sustainability aspirations and the developing skills of the participants. These links can be interesting when thinking of how consumption of new clothes can be reduced; if the supply could be altered, would different competences be needed? Reproduction of the practice takes place beyond the actual shopping, by related doings and sayings, and this points to that the practice could be part of either a bigger practice or could be closely connected to other sustainable practices that the respondents are members of. These connections would further be interesting to investigate, as well as how second-hand shopping can affect consumption entailed in other practices. As mentioned, this seems to already happen - for example with the participant who employed second-hand shopping for her reading as well - but the question that arises is if second-hand shopping in general is making other practices more sustainable, or if second-hand shopping is the result of a bigger "sustainability practice". Depending on the answer to this, different strategies might be used to facilitate increased reuse of clothes and a reduced consumption of new clothes.

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## Appendix 1: Original quotes in Swedish

1. "Jag känner att vi har inte några alternativ om vi mänskligheten ska överleva på den här planeten, då måste vi återanvända de materialen vi har. Och ett sätt att göra det är att köpa second hand."  
(Respondent 3)
2. "Det är väl det där, hela det här med att slita och inte slänga i onödan, försök att inte slänga i onödan utan var sparsam. "  
(Respondent 7)
3. "Man använder nya vattenglas varenda gång man dricker, hela tiden vi bara slösar och slösar och slösar och jag tänker att vi måste, jag måste göra det jag kan iallafall på såna stadier. Hur mycket jag använder, hur mycket jag konsumerar. "  
(Respondent 2)
4. "Jag uppskattar mycket att SH får mig att reflektera över mina behov och hur jag betar mig, alltså mina vanor. Man konsumerar väldigt mycket, man konsumerar mat och nöjen och allting i sitt liv. Och det får mig att faktiskt tänka efter hur jag lever. Det känns som en viktig samhällsfunktion, jag tänker att det väcker nog tankar hos många människor. "  
(Respondent 4)
5. "Jag är ingen så här HM-shoppare. Och det handlar om att jag gillar inte att handla mycket. Jag gillar hellre att handla lite och bra. "  
(Respondent 7)
6. "Det är konsumtion likväl, och jag tycker alltid att man ska fråga sig varför man konsumerar och liksom, att inte, man ska inte överkonsumera oavsett även om man tänker... Jag tänker att det kan vara lätt att handla i den tankespiralen - det spelar ingen roll, det är ändå till ett gott syfte, det är ändå så jag försöker tänka på det. "  
(Respondent 1)
7. "Jag ser inte riktigt SH, framför allt inte om du går till en SH-butik, jag ser inte någon andrahandsshopping som shopping, utan jag ser det mer, det är en väldigt tydlig skillnad för mig när jag köper nåt nytt liksom, då är jag väldigt medveten. Och det känns väldigt mycket det här, det här är ett nytt plagg eller en nyproducerad sak, det är något nytt. Men om jag går och handlar på SH och den är helt ny för mig så känns det ändå inte helt nytt, och det är en väldigt stor skillnad för mig skulle jag säga. "  
(Respondent 6)
8. "Sen handlar det också om att det är något som är trevligt, på samma sätt som att gå på stan och strosa i butiker, så kan man åka ut och, det finns ett fik på en av sh-butikerna jag brukar besöka, att man kan liksom göra det på en lördag och kollar lite, tar en fika, utan att egentligen ha ett mål att köpa nåt. Också lite mer spännande för man vet aldrig vad som finns där. Slentrianåka dit och kolla lite om det finns något kul, kan vara en del av det. "  
(Respondent 1)
9. "Min mamma och jag hade en tradition, som nu har det blivit lite stressigt för mig, men så här en gång i månaden så åkte vi in varje onsdag och morgonfikade på Fågelsången och sen så gick vi till Myrorna och sen så gick jag till skolan. Det var jättemysigt. "  
(Respondent 2)

10. "En annan sak är att det blir mer som en mission idag. Jag har letat efter en speciell bok med ett speciellt omslag i två år. Det är spännande att tänka att jag kanske nångång hittar den. "  
(Respondent 3)
11. "Jag tycker det är roligt också, jag har liksom åkt på loppisturer med kompisar, med min familj, jag tycker att det är kul. "  
(Respondent 4)
12. "Det är ju bara bra. Man kan liksom shoppa med gott samvete. "  
(Respondent 2)
13. "Man kanske egentligen vill ha mer kläder att välja på, men så får man lite dåligt samvete för man vill inte köpa saker när man inte behöver dem. "  
(Respondent 5)
14. "Hela den här idén att man kan återanvända, att man kan skänka, och att pengarna oftast går till det här och det här, allting bara gör mig helt uppfyllt. "  
(Respondent 2)
15. "Det är ju liksom, det är jättekul att veta att det inte är en ny sak man köper, det här har nån annan haft nytta av och även jag får nytta av det, och det känns väldigt bra i magen. "  
(Respondent 2)
16. "Det är ju naturligt, det är som att gå in i vilken butik som helst, bara att det känns bra att gå in där. Men kan få ångest av att gå in i andra butiker. "  
(Respondent 3)
17. "Sen så är det också av anledningen att jag tycker att det känns bra i kroppen att gå in och handla barnkläder t.ex. på SH. För att, det är ju liksom, man vet att pengarna går till något bra, och man vet att kläderna... Jag gillar att slita ut grejer. "  
(Respondent 7)
18. "På Tradera tycker jag det är kul att söka ibland. Jag var inne där igår på kvällen, det är lite så här tidsfördriv, skulle jag säga. "  
(Respondent 7)
19. "Plus att det känns som en simpel grej, att sitta hemma, typ som att nätshoppa, så sitter jag på Tradera istället och surfar runt och ser om det finns något som är intressant. "  
(Respondent 1)
20. "Men annars brukar jag inte bry mig. Det finns, vissa butiker är mycket dyrare än vad andra är. Så det kanske är därför jag gillar bikupan för det brukar inte vara dyrast. Så jag tror att det kanske är en anledning. "  
(Respondent 2)
21. "Tidigare var det nog mer ideell, men på senare tid kanske det blivit lite mer BR, Pop Boutique. För de har lite mer utvalda liksom, det går lite snabbare att hitta lite trendigare plagg. "  
(Respondent 6)
22. "Jag är superbra på att slänga. Jag är ingen sån där horder. Samlare. Utan jag tänker typ, jag tänker lite såhär hur ofta använder jag det här? Jag gillar ordning och reda. "  
(Respondent 7)
23. "Då väljer jag saker som jag inte använt. Jag brukar tänka, har jag inte använt de på ett halvår så borde jag seriöst överväga att inte ha de kvar i min garderob. Och är det mer än ett år, varför har jag det kvar här egentligen?"  
(Respondent 3)



24. "Jag är inte så känslomässigt attached till saker, jag vet vissa vänner som är "den här blusen hade jag på min, då och då hände det här" att det är mer så, visst det kan väl vara så att min klänning som jag använde på min studentbal, den kanske jag inte kommer skänka. Eller jo, det kanske jag till och med gjort nu." (Respondent 4)
25. "Men numer har jag nog gått över till Pop Boutique och kanske Beyond Retro, för att som sagt, skälet nu är mer miljöskäl än välgörenhet, så då blir det för att jag tycker att de har lite mer sorterade, som passar min stil." (Respondent 6)
26. "Utan då anpassar jag nog mig ganska mycket till utbudet liksom. (..) Det underlättar nog för mig ganska mycket, att jag är anpassningsbar där." (Respondent 6)
27. "Utan, varenda gång, om jag ska hitta något måste jag gå in med öppet sinne." (Respondent 5)
28. "Om jag har så här en idé om vad jag vill ha så är den oftast väldigt luddig. Så jag brukar, om jag inte hittar det jag vill ha så hittar jag nånting som funkar väldigt bra istället." (Respondent 2)
29. "Finns vissa grejer som jag letat efter i flera år typ." (Respondent 5)
30. "Jag har letat efter en speciell bok med ett speciellt omslag i två år." (Respondent 3)
31. "Jag har det alltid i bakhuvudet. Jag har alltid ett litet extra öga." (Respondent 2)
32. "Annars är det typ att jag har något i bakhuvudet som jag tänker att jag kanske kan hitta, men oftast brukar jag inte gå in med förväntningen att jag ska hitta precis det här idag, för det känns som att det inte är så det funkar på SH." (Respondent 1)